

NEWS – CONGRESSMAN PETE STARK

239 Cannon House Office Building

Washington, DC 20515

(202) 225-5065

www.stark.house.gov

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Contact: Brian Cook, (202) 225-3202

STARK RESPONSE TO THE STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

WASHINGTON – Rep. Pete Stark, Ranking Member of the House Ways and Means Health Subcommittee, today released the following statement in reaction to the President's State of the Union Address tonight:

"Tonight, the President discussed the state of the union. We are making progress thanks to the policies of the last Congress. Two years ago, the country was losing 589,000 jobs a month. This past month, the economy added 103,000 jobs.

"Unfortunately, Republicans have not yet proposed, nor has the House considered legislation that would create jobs. There are a number of common-sense proposals to create jobs that members of both parties can support – from targeted investments in green energy to cracking down on China's unfair currency policy.

"As the health reform law is implemented, more Americans are finding secure coverage and jobs are being created – over 200,000 in the health industry since the law passed last March. Instead of focusing on jobs, House Republicans have decided to re-fight the health reform debate. This push would repeal important patient protections that have already gone into effect, hurting children with pre-existing conditions, seniors in the donut hole, young adults getting coverage on their parents' policies, and many other Americans.

"Much of the focus of tonight's speech was on reducing the deficit. The President called for a freeze in federal non-defense spending. I respectfully disagree with this approach -- an eyes-closed, unilateral freeze will gut important programs that Americans depend on. Earlier today, I introduced H.R. 413, legislation to return defense spending to 2008 levels. There is no reason we should exempt 60 percent of federal discretionary spending from budget cuts.

"If we want to speed up our economic recovery, Republicans must offer some ideas to create jobs. Their laser-like focus on refighting health reform is hurting America's economy and threatening our long-term competitiveness."

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